



October 16, 2020

House Public Health Request for Information

RE: Interim Charge 2 Relating to Budgetary Changes Impacting State Health Programs

The Texas Association of Community Health Centers represents federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) throughout the state. FQHCs provide a wide array of primary and preventive care services including medical, dental, behavioral health, and vision services. The 72 health centers in Texas operate over 575 clinic sites located in 132 counties across the state.ⁱ FQHCs served over 1.6 million Texans and provided more than 6 million patient visits in 2019.ⁱⁱ Individuals without insurance made up 41% of patients, followed by Medicaid 29%, and Medicare 7%. FQHCs employed more than 12,000 FTEs.ⁱⁱⁱ

Healthy Texas Women Section 1115 Demonstration Waiver

TACHC urges lawmakers to monitor the implementation of HTW Plus to ensure services are reaching the populations intended to be served under the program.

HTW provides vital women's health services across Texas while also generating significant savings to the state.^{iv} In the most recent women's health programs report, HHSC estimated that services provided by HTW in 2019 will save the state \$96.8 million in General Revenue funds. FQHCs are a core provider in the HTW program. In FY2019, Texas FQHCs served more than 16,000 women in the HTW program and provided over 28,000 procedures.^v As comprehensive primary care providers, FQHCs are well-equipped to participate as providers in the HTW Plus program created by Senate Bill 750 in the 86th Legislative Session, though concerns remain about the rollout of this program and whether providers and beneficiaries are aware and able to access program benefits. TACHC urges lawmakers to monitor the implementation of HTW Plus to ensure services are reaching the populations intended to be served under the program.

TACHC was encouraged to see HHSC revise their implementation plan for the 5% budget reductions to not include cuts to direct client services, preserving women's health funding and other critical programs from the reductions. Protecting the HTW and Family Planning budget is critically important, especially during a global pandemic when so many Texans have lost or are at risk of losing healthcare coverage through their employers. However, TACHC does have concerns about the revised plan to reduce enrollment and eligibility workers, which will lead to delays in enrolling pregnant women, HTW applicants, and other applicants for critical social service programs. TACHC urges the legislature to find other solutions to address revenue shortfalls caused by the ongoing pandemic.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide information on these topics. Please do not hesitate to contact Shelby Tracy, Director of Policy and External Communications (stracy@tachc.org) with any questions about these comments.

ⁱ National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC). Key Health Center Data by State, 2020. Federally-Funded Health Centers Only. Available at: <https://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2020-Key-Facts-by-State.pdf>

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*

^{iv} Texas HHS, 2020 Healthy Texas Women Enrollment

^v Texas HHS. Texas Women's Health Programs Report Fiscal Year 2019. Table 4. Fiscal year 2019 HTW Service Utilization, Medical Claims, by Procedure Code.